

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Proposition 50, Chapter 8 Integrated Regional Water Management Planning Grant

PIN	5494	COUNTY	Multiple Counties
APPLICANT	Semitropic Water Storage District	AMOUNT REQUESTED	\$499,435
PROJECT TITLE	The Poso Creek IRWMP Management Group	TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$714,035

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Develop an IRWMP to store and transfer water from three major sources of surface supplies: the State Water Project, the Central Valley Project (Friant-Kern Canal) and the Kern River to other areas in California.

WORK PLAN - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has a detailed and specific work plan that adequately documents the proposal. Weighting factor is 3.

Score: 12

Comment: The work plan contains specific work items with a corresponding and consistent schedule and budget. The work plan is clear and implementable; however it is possible that the work plan includes some work that could be performed independently of the proposed IRWMP. The high hourly consultant rates plus the large amount of hours charged by the agency Manager leaves some question about the cost efficiency of the proposal.

DESCRIPTION OF REGION - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has presented a detailed and specific description that adequately documents the region. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 3

Comment: There is not a clear definition of the region boundaries or a discussion of how the region's boundaries were determined. However, there is an extensive description of the various districts and what their issues are. Justification and rationale for benefits of regional efforts over and above individual uncoordinated activities are not described. This proposal fails to address any of the important biological communities and environmental resources located within the boundaries of this region. It also fails to address cultural, social values, and economic condition and trends in the region.

OBJECTIVES - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has presented detailed and specific planning objectives. Weighting factor is 2.

Score: 6

Comment: Objectives of the proposed IRWMP are stated in general terms with no explanation as to how they were determined. One major water quality issue in the region which is not directly addressed here is the occurrence of arsenic contaminated groundwater. Conflicts and ecosystem restoration are required major objectives identified in the review criteria as minimum IRWMP standards, and a discussion of these objectives could not be found in the application.

INTEGRATION OF WATER MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented how water management strategies will be integrated. Weighting factor is 2.

Score: 6

Comment: In a primarily operational sense, the applicant demonstrates the multiple benefits to be derived from planned project implementation by providing examples of projects which enhance flexibility for conjunctive use operations. A groundwater model and a monitoring network are the only two elements mentioned in the application under this topic. The applicant does not demonstrate an understanding how multiple water management strategies produce synergistic effects and the following strategies were not considered: ecosystem restoration, habitat protection and improvement, flood management, recreation and public access, water conservation, water quality protection and improvement, water recycling, and wetlands creation or enhancement.

IMPLEMENTATION - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately detailed plan implementation. Weighting factor is 2.

Score: 8

Comment: The proposal did not provide a schedule for implementation of the plan beyond adoption. A framework for analysis of implementation projects would be developed within the IRWMP to address financing and agency responsibility. The application states that implementation of the IRWMP will be developed and refined through extensive dialogue between all members of the RWMG, stakeholders, and others. A list of proposed projects is provided. Sharing of conveyance capacity, joint use of spreading grounds, and water exchange agreements are mentioned as way to meet goals. Monitoring of the performance of the IRWMP implementation is not well developed.

IMPACTS AND BENEFITS - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately presented and documented the impacts and benefits of the Plan. Weighting factor is 2.

Score: 6

Comment: The proposal would include development of a process to assess potential impacts of implementation projects and for CEQA compliance, but it is not described in detail. Subtask 2.3.7 would include CEQA compliance for IRWMP implementation and an evaluation of the impacts and benefits to five subject areas which are similar to the IRWMP objectives. The application lacks a discussion of impacts to adjacent areas. IRWMP implementation impacts are to be assessed using modeling tools and a process to be developed in the IRWMP, but a discussion of benefits of developing the IRWMP could not be found in the application.

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DATA AND TECHNICAL ANALYSIS - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has presented detailed and specific data and technical analysis components of the proposal. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 4

Comment: The IRWMP will include a section to detail existing and needed data, in addition to technical methods for evaluation of IRWMP performance during implementation. It is not possible to determine whether available data is adequate for the proposed planning effort without a listing and description of said data. However, the adopted IRWMP should at least identify existing data reviewed and data gaps. Although this is not explicitly stated in the narrative, it is apparent in the work plan items.

DATA MANAGEMENT - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has presented detailed and specific data management procedures. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 4

Comment: Applicant states data would be made available to State agencies and additional monitoring may even be added to support statewide data management efforts, such as new water quality monitoring in support of SWRCB efforts. Existing database data would also be made web accessible under Subtask 2.3.8. The application states that data will be shared and maintained through existing programs with Kern County Water Agency (KCWA) and the SWRCB. No mention is made of DWR's groundwater level database. A process will be developed by the RWMG to make new data available. More specifics are needed.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented stakeholder involvement concerns. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 5

Comment: An initial list of stakeholders is provided. The RWMG will conduct outreach meetings to develop a methodology for encouraging more stakeholders to participate. Stakeholders will be contacted by written correspondence. This project will sufficiently involve stakeholders in planning meetings and hold public comment periods on the IRWMP and will actively attempt to identify new stakeholders. One groundwater monitoring committee agency, Southern San Joaquin Municipal Utility District, has decided not to participate, but may be included later and is considered a stakeholder in the process.

DISADVANTAGE COMMUNITIES - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented disadvantaged community concerns. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 3

Comment: The cities of Shafter and Wasco are DACs to be included as stakeholders in the IRWMP. Their water resource context is not detailed and the benefit cited for the two DAC's appears to be the indirect benefit of increased local water supply reliability. The City of Shafter also submitted in planning grant proposal.

RELATION TO LOCAL PLANNING - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented the Plan's relationship to local planning efforts. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 4

Comment: Local plans and entities along with county plans and planners will be included in the IRWMP development process by review and consultation. Preservation of the agricultural character and its economic viability is an objective of the IRWMP process and is not expected to conflict with Kern and Tulare Counties land use planning. The proposal mentions UWMPs of cities in the area, but does not address how they will relate to the IRWM water management strategies or the dynamic between the two levels of planning.

AGENCY COORDINATION - Scoring will be based on whether the applicant has adequately documented agency coordination issues. Weighting factor is 1.

Score: 3

Comment: Applicants plan to hold regular meetings where interagency coordination will be possible and all of the interested agencies will be invited to attend. SWP and CVP interests would be considered as stakeholder interests to be incorporated in the IRWMP. Other State and federal agency objectives and roles would be identified for integration into the IRWMP during Task 3.3 strategy development. KCWA is not included and should be. KCWA is the owner and operator of the Cross Valley Canal which is included in some of the implementation projects and is used to manage water supply within the region.

TOTAL SCORE: 64